Printing Large Spreadsheets

Some Excel spreadsheets are not created to be printed. Considering that a spreadsheet could have as many as 16,384 columns and 1,048,576 rows, you can imagine then why not all spreadsheets print easily. There are things that can be done to help print large spreadsheets, however. The changes could include any or all of the following:

- Moving page breaks in Page Break Preview
- Clearing formatting causing extra blank pages to print
- Changing the page orientation
- Changing the paper size
- Adjusting the margins in Print Preview
- Changing the font size
- Changing the page print order
- Wrapping text to fit the column/row
- Scaling to fit

Working with Page Breaks in Page Break Preview

In **Page Break Preview** you can clearly see how many pages will print and in what order. You can also move page breaks to new locations by clicking and dragging the page breaks.

1. Click the **View Tab | Page Break Preview**. The spreadsheet displays numbering each page in the order in which they will print.

2. To change the page break locations, click on the blue dashed line and drag it to the left, right, up or down as appropriate.

3. To insert a hard page break, click into the cell directly to the right and one row below where you want to break the pages. Right-click on the spreadsheet and select **Insert Page Break** from the shortcut menu.
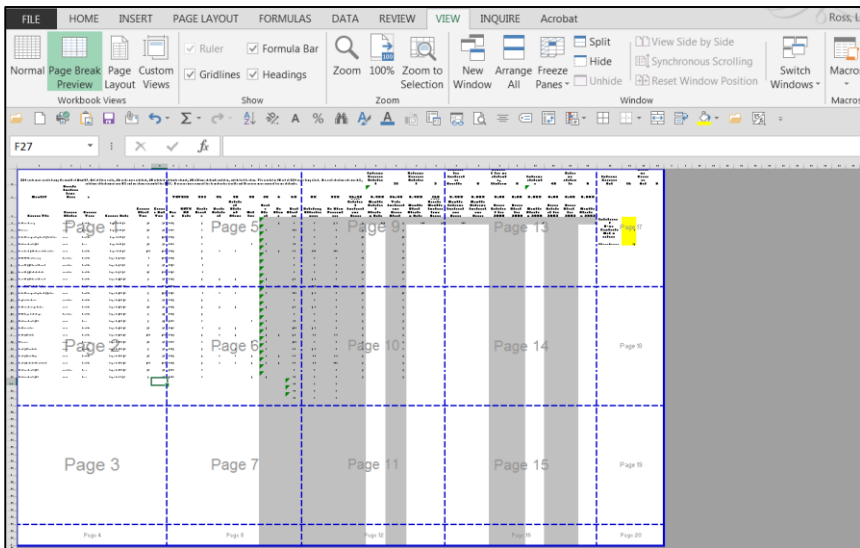
To reset the page breaks to the default, right-click on the spreadsheet and select ***Reset All Page Breaks.***


Click ***Page Layout Tab | Breaks*** *and select to* ***Insert Page Break, Remove Page Break*** *or* ***Reset All Page Breaks****.*

4. To return to the spreadsheet, click **View | Normal**.

Changing the Page Print Order

You may want to change the order in which the pages are printed. By default, Excel prints pages down, and then over, however, you may want to print over, then down.
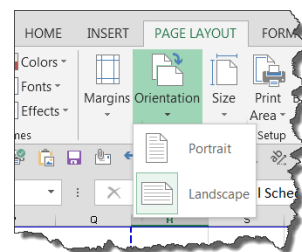

1. Click the **Page Layout Tab | Page Setup dialog box launcher | Sheet Tab**. The Page order options display (shown right).

2. In the **Page order** options select either **Down, then over** or **Over, then down**.
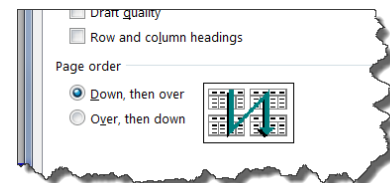
Changing the Page Orientation

1. Click the **Page Layout Tab**.

2. Click the **Orientation** drop-down arrow in the **Page Setup** options. The drop-down list displays (shown right) with the options to change the page orientation to either **Portrait** or **Landscape**.

3. Select **Landscape** to turn the page. This will give you more width for additional columns to print on each page.

Changing the Paper Size

1. Click the **Page Layout Tab**.

2. Click the **Size** drop-down arrow in the **Page Setup** options. The drop-down list displays (shown right) with the options to change the paper size.

3. Select the appropriate paper size.

4. If you do not see the paper size you would like to use click **More Paper Sizes**. The **Page Setup** dialog box displays on the **Page Tab** (shown right).

From the Page Setup dialog box you can also change the Page Orientation, scale the page to print smaller, or fit the content to print on certain number of pages.

5. Click the **Paper Size** drop-down arrow and select the appropriate paper size.

6. Click **OK**.
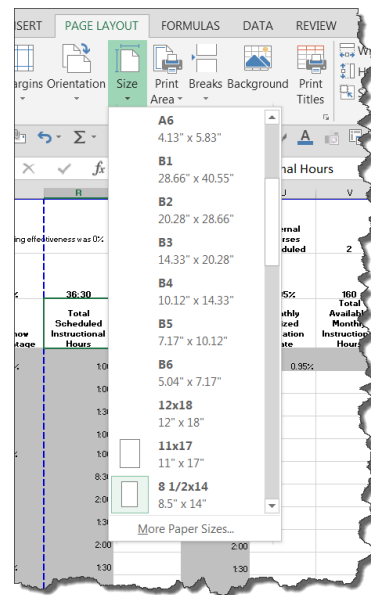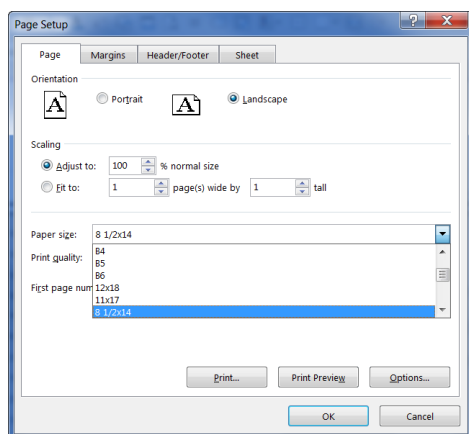
Adjusting the Margins in Print Preview

This will allow you to adjust the page margins and adjust the width of the columns in the printout.

1. Click the **File Tab | Print**. The Print Options and Print Preview displays.

You can change the printout page orientation and paper size here as well.

2. To display the margins for the header, footer and columns, click the **Margins** button in the bottom right corner of the **Print Preview** display (shown right). Margin Anchors display at the top and bottom header/footer edges. Column anchors display at the separation between the columns.

3. To adjust the width of the page margin, header height and width or column width, click on an anchor and hold your mouse as you drag up, down, left or right as appropriate.
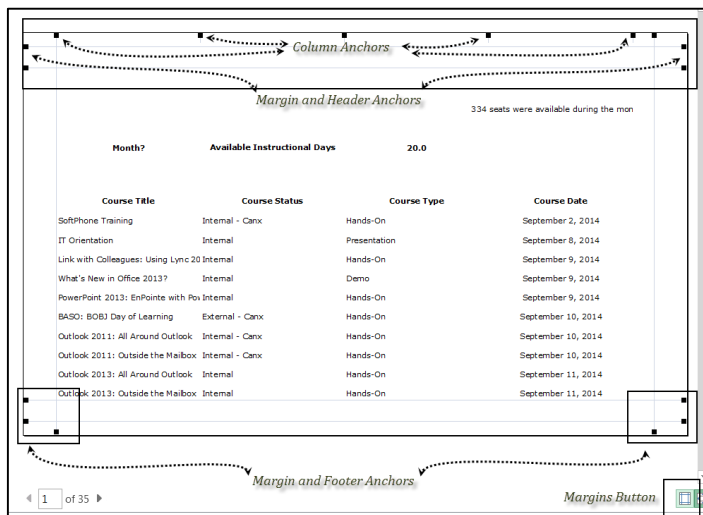
Formatting Changes to Print More Content on Each Page

Formatting a spreadsheet to print on fewer pages could be as simple as changing the font and column width.

Changing the Font

1. From **Normal View**, click the **Select All** button (shown right).

2. From the **Home Tab**, click the **Font** drop-down arrow and change the point size as desired.

If you change the font to smaller than 8 point it may not be readable.
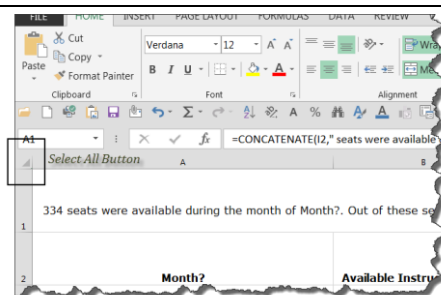
Adjusting the Columns/Rows to fit the Contents

Adjusting the columns or rows to fit the contents may change the pagination of the columns, or rows, especially if you have changed the font to a smaller size.

1. From **Normal View**, click the **Select All** button (shown above).

2. From the **Home Tab**, click the **Format** drop-down arrow and select **AutoFit Row Height** to adjust the rows to the height of the contents.

3. From the **Home Tab**, click the **Format** drop-down arrow and select **AutoFit Column Width** to adjust the width of the columns to fit the largest content.
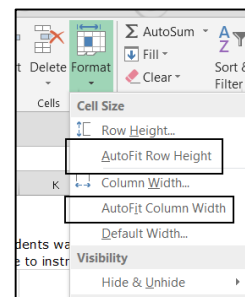
Wrapping Text To Fit

If you change the column to a smaller width, you may want to wrap the text to fit the column which will allow you to paginate the text within the columns.

1. Select the content to be adjusted (select a column by clicking the column Letter identifier, select a row by clicking the Row Number Identifier, or select everything by clicking the Select All button shown above).

2. From the **Home Tab**, click **Wrap Text** to wrap long text into multiple lines in a cell.

Clearing Blank Cells to Stop Printing Blank Pages

Sometimes when printing spreadsheets blank pages will print along after the spreadsheet data. This happens when cells which appear blank actually have cell formatting, a comment, a hyperlink, border formatting, data validation or formulas. There is an easy way to clear All Content associated with a cell using a couple of selection shortcut keystrokes.

1. Place your cursor in the first cell in a column to the right of the spreadsheet data which appears blank.

2. Press the keystroke combination **Control + Shift + Right Arrow** to select from the blank cell to the end of the columns.

3. Without changing the selection, press the keystroke combination **Control + Shift + Down Arrow** to select from the blank cell to the end of the rows.

Now you will have selected all the columns and rows to the right of your spreadsheet data.

4. Click the **Home Tab | Clear | Clear All**. This will clear formatting, comments, content, and hyperlinks.

5. Without changing the selection, click the **Home Tab | Borders | No Borders** to remove the borders.

Cells that are causing blank pages to print could be in rows after your spreadsheet data. Place your cursor in the first cell in the first row after your spreadsheet data. Repeat steps 2-5 above.

6. Look at the spreadsheet **in Print Preview** and check if any blank pages will print.

Scale to Fit

Scaling allows you to adjust the size of a worksheet before printing. Scaling is most often used to shrink an Excel worksheet to fit on fewer sheets of paper. It can also be used to magnify a small worksheet to make it easier to read once it has been printed.

There are three scaling options available on the **Page Layout Tab**:

- **Width** – use to decrease the width of a printout to fit on a set number of pages.
- **Height** - use to decrease the height of a printout to fit on a set number of pages.
- **Scale** - use to shrink or stretch a printout to a percentage of its actual size.
  - o Shrink a printout by setting the scale percentage to less than 100%.
  - o Stretch a printout by setting the scale percentage to greater than 100%.
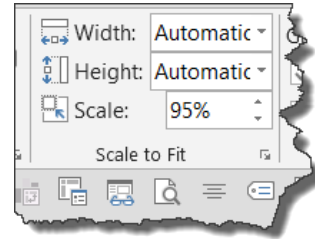
The Scale option is only available if the Width and Height options are set to Automatic.

Printing Charts

It is simple to print only a particular chart independent of the worksheet data it represents.

1. Click **Home Tab | Find and Select | Selection Pane**. A pane opens to the right with a list of the object that can be selected.

2. Make sure **Show All** is selected and then click on the **Chart** to be printed.

3. Click the **File Tab | Print** or press **Ctrl + P**. You will see the chart displayed in the print preview area and the Print settings will default to "Print Selected Chart."

   - To change the orientation, click the **Orientation** drop-down arrow and select from **Portrait Orientation** or **Landscape Orientation**.
   - To change the margins, click the **Margins** drop-down arrow and select from the pre-defined gallery or click **Custom** to create unique margins manually.
   - To make changes to the workbook, click **Page Setup**.

4. When done selecting your printing options, click **Print**.